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Dear Harold,

Thanks for your letters of September 11, September 30, and November 5. I was wondering if anyone would claim the leftover copy of the two EOC pages (enclosed). Sorry!

Here it is, 24 years later already! Oswald was just that old in 1963.

I really don't know what to make of Eddowes. I tried to be accurate in EOC without saying too much. I think he is still alive - Nigel Turner of ITV, who has started working on a 25th-anniversary program - told me about a recent long talk with him. If nothing else, the fact that enemies of the Kennedys were retailing Novotny-like stories at the time makes them worthy of attention.

I also recall the word "poontang" from my youth - I think from high school in Charlottesville, rather than from Harvard. I was disappointed that Safire didn't do a column on the word after the JFK story came out. For some reason, I suspect it is from the Philippines, like "boondocks."

Gandolfo has not written me since June, which is fine with me. I had not heard of his wife's accident.

You mentioned a report of a scheduled confrontation between Gandolfo and Blakey at the Justice Department. The rumor I heard recently - from Dick (Critic) Sprague through Mark and Kevin - was that there had in fact been some sort of meeting, involving Blakey, Louis Nizer as his attorney, Gandolfo, and Jeff Fogel (Vogel?). Highly implausible - I can't imagine anything less than a court order getting Blakey in the same room as Gandolfo - and I am told that Gandolfo has a record of phonying up invitations from official bodies. (Well, he did it at least once, I'm told.)

I hear from John Davis that you are being very helpful on his Marcello book. At first, I dismissed some of those FBI allegations as routine and implausible, but they - and the way the FBI handled them - are looking a bit more interesting as more records turn up.

With best regards,

Paul

PLH

O'Neill says he "used to think that the only people who doubted the conclusions of the Warren Commission were crackpots," but "there will always be some skepticism in my mind." The book, which I have seen but not read, apparently has no other reference to the assassination controversy; there seems to be no mention of the HSCA, much less the failure of the Justice Department to react and report to O'Neill.

Blakey found the O'Donnell story "interesting," and O'Neill's account "a small footnote in history." ("Seeking the 2nd gunman: Experts back JFK aide's tale"; Boston Herald, 20 Jul, 2 pp. with photos, #92.) The other expert quoted was Michael Kurtz, who noted that there were other reported instances of FBI pressure on witnesses.

Dave Powers told the Herald that "he didn't want to dredge up the 'painful' memory of the assassination," and that "we'll never know for sure what happened." (#93, 21 Jul; Ted and Joe Kennedy had little to say about the book, which is not flattering to all the Kennedys.)

Larry Haapanen and Donna Davis pointed out to me that the O'Donnell story surfaced in other forms in 1975 and 1977. Bob Wiedrich of the Chicago Tribune reported that O'Donnell and Powers were persuaded not to disclose their suspicions by either Hoover or his top aides, according to an oral briefing of Congressional leaders "by a [CIA] liaison man in advance of twin Capitol Hill investigations of CIA activity." (Seattle Times version: #94, 6/14/75) The FBI reportedly warned the two men that testimony about a knoll shot "could lead to a possible international incident, and inflame public passions fed by other secret information then known by the FBI."

This is a puzzling story. It seems implausible that, even in 1975, the CIA would be complaining so bluntly about the FBI investigation to members of Congress. Can anyone tell us who the CIA liaison man might have been? The alleged briefing apparently also referred to Oswald's visit to the embassies in Mexico City, and the CIA-Mafia plots against Castro.

O'Donnell flatly denied the story in 1975, calling it "an absolute, outright lie." Powers admitted to a "fleeting impression" of a shot from the front, which is what he told the WC. (7 WCH 473) The published HSCA material did not deal with O'Donnell as an eyewitness. He told the WC that "my reaction in part is reconstruction - is that they came from the right rear." (7 WCH 468). (Speaking of witnesses, the present Speaker, Jim Wright, was scheduled to ride in the motorcade, along with other Texas Congressmen who also were not questioned by the Commission; 17 WCH 615.)

In 1977, O'Neill said he believed that some witnesses did not give a "full and honest description" to the WC but "were reporting the will of the FBI." (#95, 5 Apr 77, AP in SFC). Neither O'Neill nor the AP's "source close to him" gave O'Donnell's name. The context was a question about whether there was evidence to justify the HSCA investigation, which had been approved the previous week.

Before accepting anyone's interpretation of what the FBI apparently did, I would like to see the Bureau's side of the story. Would any EOC reader like to search the released FBI files, or submit a FOIA request? If top FBI people met with O'Donnell, perhaps around the time of his WC testimony, I would expect that memos exist. Even self-serving ones might be informative.

Would the FBI seek someone like O'Donnell out, and urge him to testify falsely on this point? After all, there were lots of witnesses who did report hearing shots from various directions, and the WC did not have much trouble concluding that they were not credible. A claim that the FBI asked him to keep quiet about what he knew of the autopsy, or of allegations of Teamster involvement (HSCAR 177), would be more plausible and more interesting.

However, what if O'Donnell himself had been asking people about the possible significance of what he heard or suspected? Then the FBI could have innocently convinced him that his earwitness testimony did not carry much weight against the hard evidence they had, and that there was not much point

in making a fuss. He might have been more receptive to encouragement to hold his tongue than the Wiedrich and O'Neill accounts suggest.

That is, the significant pressure may have come from his perception of the concerns of the family. So, even though O'Donnell's impressions about the shots were of little evidentiary value even in 1964, his behavior may indeed say something interesting about the attitude of the extended Kennedy family.

Jim Garrison, twenty years later:

In 1967, Jim Garrison established himself as the most prominent critic of the Warren Report. Before the Shaw trial, many of us started waiting for him to deliver on his promises; some of us are still waiting. His latest book is, as far as I know, a completed manuscript without a publisher.

Big Jim did have something to say in response to a letter to him in which I essentially repeated some of the comments in 8 EOC 1.9-10 and 8 EOC 2.5-6. (#96, 8 Jul 86) He did not reply to me, but sent a letter to Ted Gandolfo. (#97, 8 Aug 86, taken from Gandolfo's book.)

The "nature of Mr. Hoch's assault points out a problem which should concern every assassination critic.... Mr. Hoch has a finely tuned aggression and is wonderfully ferocious.... The unfortunate thing about the position which Mr. Hoch has taken - attacking a critic who for 17 [sic, not 19?] years has been attempting to point out the culpability of the C.I.A. in the assassination - is that some people who do not know any better might draw the conclusion that his sympathies are really with the Agency." It's nice of Judge Garrison to be so concerned about my reputation.

With regard to my questions about Garrison's alleged pre-arrest evidence against Shaw, which Garrison characterized as "criticizing judgments made by me when I was District Attorney of New Orleans back in the 1960's," needless to say I did not get any new facts, or even a recitation of some old ones. "I was not aware that Mr. Hoch has had any experience in criminal prosecutions. It has been my policy not to reply to gratuitous critiques of my former office when made by individuals with neither the standing nor the professional experience to make such criticisms." Well, he's certainly got me there. "Because this is 1986 and the forces which killed John Kennedy still remain firmly in control, I personally cannot get too excited about such remote problems as, for example, the pedantic question of how many angels could dance on the head of a pin a number of years ago."

You can get a glimpse of Garrison in a new film, "The Big Easy." (The title refers to New Orleans.) "The supporting cast oozes Louisiana strangeness.... Judge Jim Garrison plays a judge, 'the Honorable James Garrison.'" (In a small cameo role, I am told.) In Garrison's fictitious world, the Mafia is a major presence. "Sexy, but implausible," said the SFC critic, accurately enough - but he was referring to the movie as whole. (#98, 28 Aug 87, SFC, 2 pp.)

Curses! Exposed again!

Gandolfo has written to me in response to 9 EOC 1, pointing out a number of flaws in my analysis. For one thing, he claims 2700 subscribers for his newsletter, not 2800. Also, I am a "deceiving, lying CIA employed son-of-a-bitch." There is more, but the CIA doesn't want me to print all of Gandolfo's letter, so I will just send a free copy to anyone who asks. (#99, 2 pp.)

Ted Gandolfo's book on the HSCA:

Gandolfo has self-published a treatise entitled "The House Select Committee on Assassinations Coverup." It is available for \$25.25, including postage and handling, from the author at 1214 First Ave., NYC, NY 10021.

Of the 300 pages, about half are documents, such as Congressional Record excerpts, a hundred-page Rules Committee transcript (31 Mar 76), and the like - not without value. About half the rest includes material from other buffs